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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 003910

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SUBJECT: JORDAN: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ, QUADRIPARTITE
MEETING

SUMMARY

NEWS REPORTS IN JORDAN'S DAILIES ON JULY 16 COVERED THE KING'S INTERVIEW WITH NBC IN WHICH HE REAFFIRMED THAT THERE IS NO UNDERSTANDING WITH THE U.S. TO USE JORDAN AS A BASE FOR AN ATTACK ON IRAQ, THE VISIT ORGANIZED FOR JOURNALISTS TO JORDAN'S AIR BASE IN THE EAST TO CONFIRM THAT THERE ARE NO U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL THERE, AN INTERVIEW WITH THE IRAQI AMBASSADOR IN AMMAN, AND REPORTS THAT THE U.S. WOULD ASK ARAB MINISTERS AT THE QUADRIPARTITE MEETING TO "MARGINALIZE ARAFAT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE."

EDITORIAL WRITERS COMMENTED ON A NUMBER OF DOMESTIC SUBJECTS, AND A FEW WROTE AGAINST THE ANTICIPATED MILITARY STRIKE AGAINST IRAQ, WARNING OF A POPULAR REACTION AGAINST THE U.S.

NEWS REPORTS

THE LEAD STORY IN ALL JORDANIAN DAILIES ON JULY 16 COVERED KING ABDULLAH'S INTERVIEW WITH NBC, IN WHICH HE REAFFIRMED, ACCORDING TO THE REPORTS, THAT THERE IS NO UNDERSTANDING WITH WASHINGTON REGARDING A STRIKE AGAINST IRAQ, AND REITERATED THE WARNING THAT STRIKING IRAQ OR PARTITIONING IT WOULD LEAD TO A CATASTROPHE.

DAILIES ALSO REPORTED THAT JOURNALISTS WERE ALLOWED TO VISIT THE MUWAFFAQ AL-SALTI AIRBASE IN AZRAQ (EAST OF JORDAN) TO CONFIRM THAT THERE ARE NO U.S. TROOPS THERE.

ASSABEEL (INDEPENDENT WEEKLY REFLECTING THE VIEWS OF THE ISLAMIC ACTION FRONT) INTERVIEWED THE IRAQI AMBASSADOR IN AMMAN, WHO SAID THAT HIS COUNTRY IS FULLY PREPARED, EVEN THOUGH IT HAS NO WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION. IN A POSSIBLE REFERENCE TO REPORTS ABOUT A JORDANIAN ROLE IN THE MILITARY ACTION, THE AMBASSADOR SAID: "WE KNOW FROM WHERE THE WIND WILL BLOW, AND WE KNOW FROM WHERE THE HYENAS WILL COME TO GNAW OUR FLESH, BUT IRAQ IS LIKE A WOUNDED WOLF THAT SLEEPS WITH HIS EYES HALF SHUT, AND IT WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY BETRAYAL."

COVERAGE OF THE QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE MEETING HIGHLIGHTED DIFFERENT ASPECTS, FROM A SAUDI PAPER BEING SUBMITTED BY THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF JORDAN AND EGYPT, TO THE "AMERICAN INSTRUCTIONS TO MARGINALIZE ARAFAT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, AFTER WASHINGTON REALIZED THE DIFFICULTY OF OUSTING HIM."

EDITORIAL COMMENTARIES

-- NO TO THE AMERICAN STRIKE AGAINST IRAQ
THE LEADER COMMENTARY IN CENTER-LEFT, INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-DUSTOUR ON JULY 16 READ: "JORDAN DENIES REPEATEDLY AND EMPHATICALLY THE PRESENCE OF AMERICAN FORCES ON ITS TERRITORY, AND IT OPENS ITS AIR BASES AND MILITARY INSTALLATIONS TO FOREIGN JOURNALISTS TO CONFIRM FOR THEMSELVES THE FALSEHOOD OF MEDIA REPORTS IN THIS CONCERN. AT THE SAME TIME, JORDAN WARNS AGAINST THE FOLLY OF THE UNITED STATES IN BEING DRIVEN SOLELY BY THE LOGIC OF INIQUITOUS POWER, AND IT WARNS AGAINST THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES TO THE WHOLE REGION SHOULD WASHINGTON CARRY OUT ITS THREATS."

-- THE WORLD IS NOT A CHESS SET
DR. NABIL AL-SHARIF, CHIEF EDITOR OF CENTER-LEFT, INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-DUSTOUR WROTE ON JULY 16: "THE AMERICAN GIANT HAS SUFFERED FROM HIS WOUNDED PRIDE SINCE THE EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 11, SO HE SEEKS TO RESTORE HIS PRESTIGE BY IMPOSING HIS HEGEMONY ON THE WORLD AND PLAYING SCISSORS AND PASTE WITH THE WORLD MAP AS A CHILD DOES ON HIS COMPUTER. THE REMAINING MONTHS OF THIS SUMMER MAY BRING FIRE WHOSE HEAT IS BEYOND

IMAGINATION. BUT THE REALITY OF LIFE ON THIS PLANET IS ALSO PREGNANT WITH SURPRISES TO TYRANNICAL POWERS THAT ARE BLINDED BY THEIR POWER TO THE POINT WHERE THEY CANNOT DISTINGUISH BETWEEN FACTS AND WISHFUL THINKING. THE WORLD IS NOT A CHESS SET, AND PEOPLE ARE NOT PAWNS."

-- SHOULD IRAQ BE ATTACKED

ATEF AL-JOLANI, CHIEF EDITOR OF ASSABEEL (INDEPENDENT WEEKLY REFLECTING THE VIEWS OF THE ISLAMIC ACTION FRONT) WROTE ON JULY 16: "ALL ARAB STATES HAVE DECLARED OPENLY THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE PROSPECTIVE AMERICAN AGGRESSION AGAINST IRAQ, BUT THE U.S. HAS TURNED A DEAF EAR AND AFFIRMED ITS INTENTION NOT ONLY TO CARRY OUT ITS AGGRESSION, BUT ALSO TO VIOLATE THE SOVEREIGNTY OF ARAB STATES IN COURSE OF THIS ATTACK WITHOUT SEEKING THE PERMISSION OF THESE STATES. AS FOR THE ARAB PEOPLE, WHOSE HEARTS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WITH THE CAUSE OF THEIR NATION, THEIR SWORDS HAVE REMAINED DYSFUNCTIONAL TO A POINT THAT MADE AMERICAN OFFICIALS DISCOUNT THEM. THEY ARE NOW CALLED UPON TO PROVE TO THE HAWKS OF THE U.S. THE ERROR OF THEIR CALCULATIONS, WHICH HAVE TOTALLY DISMISSED THE ARAB STREET, AND TO CONFIRM TO THE U.S. AND ITS ALLIES THAT PEOPLE CAN BE SURPRISING." GNEHM